

ROXBURY DURING THE SIEGE OF BOSTON APRIL 1775–MARCH 1776



MEETING-HOUSE HILL IN 1790.

INTRODUCTION

This four-part curriculum is designed to introduce students to Roxbury's role during the Siege of Boston. It relies on primary sources to allow students to work like young historians, discovering what can be learned from documents such as maps, diaries, letters, images, and tax valuation lists.

In order to provide a context, the curriculum begins with mapping activities, to familiarize students with the lay of the land in 1775. It also includes activities that introduce students to the people who lived in Roxbury in the 1770s. In conjunction with a visit to the historic sites in Roxbury, the primary sources and activities in this curriculum bring the events of 1775 and early 1776 alive.

Note: All primary source documents are available on the accompanying CD-ROM.

A National Park Service Civic Engagement Program funded this curriculum as part of a collaboration project between Boston National Historical Park and Discover Roxbury, a non-profit organization, offering programs on the history and culture of Roxbury. The goal of this collaboration is to connect the park's historical resource, Dorchester Heights National Monument, with Roxbury's historical sites associated with the Siege of Boston. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/bost/ and www.discoverroxbury.org. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and expertise of Professors Robert Allison and Beth Bower of Suffolk University.

CURRICULUM: ROXBURY DURING THE SIEGE OF BOSTON, APRIL 1775–MARCH 1776

MASSACHUSETTS FRAMEWORKS

3.1 On a map of Massachusetts, locate major cities and towns [including] the Charles River.

3.5 Explain important political, economic, and military developments leading to and during the American Revolution.

- A. the growth of towns and cities in Massachusetts before the Revolution
- C. the beginning of the Revolution at Lexington and Concord
- D. the battle of Bunker Hill
- E. Revolutionary leaders

5.17 Describe the major battles of the Revolution

- A. Lexington and Concord
- B. Bunker Hill

USI.5 Explain the role of Massachusetts in the Revolution, including important events that took place in Massachusetts and important leaders from Massachusetts.

Specific to Boston students:

3.8 On a map of Massachusetts, locate the class's home town or city and its local geographic features and landmarks.

3.9 Identify historic buildings, monuments, or sites in the area and explain their purpose and significance.

3.11 Identify when the students' own town or city was founded, and describe the different groups of people who have settled in the community since its founding.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How did people in Massachusetts (and beyond) respond when they felt their livelihoods and lives were threatened?

ORGANIZING IDEA

Roxbury, considered among the most prominent towns in Massachusetts in the 18th century, paid a pivotal role in the siege of Boston.

KEY QUESTIONS

- ❖ How did Boston and the surrounding area look in 1775?
- ❖ What was Roxbury like in the early 1770s?
 - What was the lay of the land?
 - Who lived there?
 - What the town's role and position in Massachusetts at the time?
- ❖ What was Roxbury's role in the siege of Boston?
- ❖ Who were the men stationed in Roxbury during the siege and what was life like for them during those months?
- ❖ How did the siege end?

THE NARRATIVE

APRIL 19, 1775

Tensions between people living in Massachusetts and other British colonies in North America and the British Parliament had been escalating for years. April 19, 1775, Regulars under orders from General Gage (governor of Massachusetts) marched through Cambridge and Lexington (where they exchanged fire with Minutemen) into Concord, where they knew military supplies were stored. They didn't have much luck destroying the supplies because a few days before, the provincials had gotten word that the Regulars were planning to come and had moved most of the stores out of Concord. More gunfire was exchanged between Minutemen and Regulars at the North Bridge in Concord in the morning of April 19. Finally, hours later, exhausted, the Regulars began the long march back to Boston. Meanwhile word had quickly spread in dozens of town about the actions of the Regulars. As they tried to get back to Boston, the Regulars were shot at by scores of provincial men. After reinforcements came from Boston, the Regulars increased their attacks on homes from which they believed they were being fired at. Eventually, they got back to Charlestown. Several days later, they left Charlestown for Boston. As a result of the fighting on April 19, 73 Regulars died, 174 were wounded, and 26 were missing. Of the provincials, 49 men died, 39 were wounded, and 4 were missing. (visit <http://www.nps.gov/mima/> Minute Man National Historic Park)

VOCABULARY

army: an organized, usually large, military force

breastwork: a wall put up for defense, about breast high

floating battery: guns, such as cannon, mounted on a floating platform

meetinghouse: a church

militia: a military force raised from among the people; sometimes instead of an army, sometimes in addition to; New England towns had militias for their protection

Minutemen: groups of men who volunteered from local militias to "stand at a minute's warning in case of an alarm," hence the name "minuteman." Concord, Worcester, and Roxbury were among the first towns to raise companies of Minutemen

parsonage: house where a pastor or minister lives

peninsula: a piece of land almost completely surrounded by water

Provincial Congress: this elected group replaced the General Court, or legislature, in Massachusetts when the royal governor refused to let the General Court meet

Provincials: the people living in the British North American provinces or colonies; also used as the name for the militia and/or army of the provinces

Redcoats: name given to British troops because of the color of their jackets

Regulars: British troops fighting under General Gage following orders from Great Britain

siege: military action where a town (or building) is surrounded or blockaded to prevent anyone from leaving and anyone or anything from getting to the place under siege

tillage land: land on which crops can be grown

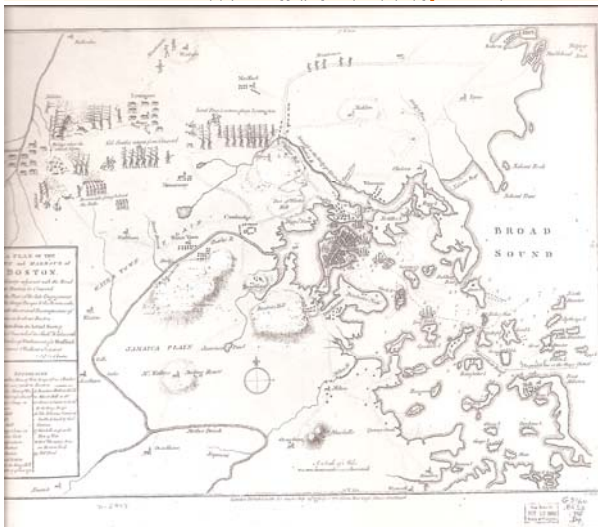
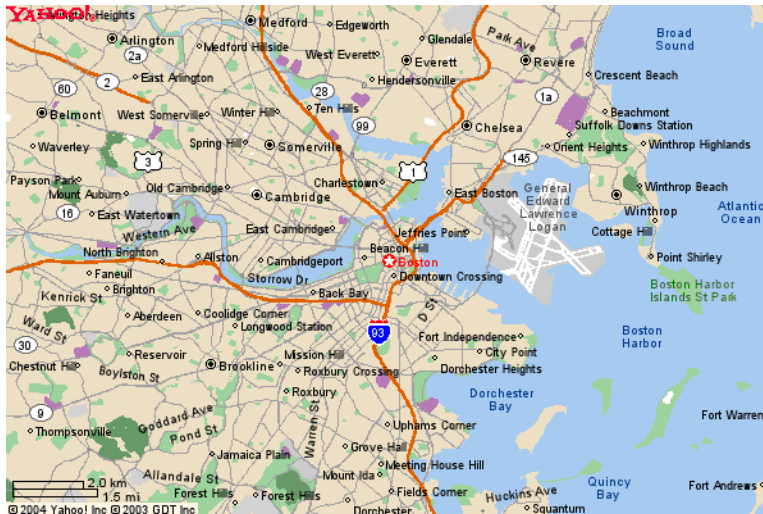
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

PART 1: MAPPING GREATER BOSTON IN 1775

Activity 1: Comparing greater Boston 1775 to the present

Show the present-day map of greater Boston on the screen or distribute copies to the students (PS 1). Discuss landmarks familiar to the students. Then distribute copies of the map of the area based on DeCosta's map of 1775. (PS 2 does not show where provincials set up their camps.)

- Compare and contrast the two maps.
- Discuss how huge projects were undertaken in the 1800s, filling in what were once tidal flats and marshes. The two diagrams at the end of the lesson can give students a clear sense of the changes, too.
- What appear to be the most significant land changes?



Primary Source 1: Present-day map of greater Boston

Primary Source 2: J. De Costa map of greater Boston, 1775 (altered to appear without placement of troops)

Activity 2: Creating Big Maps

Using an outline map of greater Boston in 1775 and DeCosta's map of 1775, follow the directions for making Big Maps (see Supplementary Materials at end of lesson). The map should clearly show land versus water and should include: names of the towns, islands, and rivers, and elevated areas.

Discuss in class: Once the Regulars had retreated to Boston, what decisions did the Provincial Congress have to make?

Step Up: Read the excerpts from Dr. Joseph Warren's letter to the Inhabitants of Great Britain (PS 3), have students answer the questions at the end of the document, and discuss as a class what we can learn from a primary source such as this.

Primary Source 3: Excerpts from a letter sent by Joseph Warren "To the Inhabitants of Great Britain," April 26, 1775

Dr. Joseph Warren was the president of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, which met in Watertown April 22, 1775. The Congress gathered depositions—statements given under oath—from people who witnessed what happened on April 19. They wrote a letter to Benjamin Franklin, who was the colonial representative in London. They gave "To the Inhabitants of Great Britain," and the depositions to Franklin on May 29, 1775. (See biographies to learn more about Dr. Warren, who was born in Roxbury.)

Friends and fellow-subjects: Hostilities are at length commenced in this colony by the troops under the command of General Gage; and it being of the greatest importance that an early, true, and authentic account of this inhuman proceeding, should be known to you, the Congress of this colony have transmitted the same and... think it proper to address you on the alarming occasion....

Warren goes on to describe what happened in Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. He continues:

To give the particular account of the ravages of the troops [the Regulars], as they retreated from Concord to Charlestown, would be very difficult... Let it suffice to say, that a great number of the houses on the road were plundered, and rendered unfit for use; several were burnt; women in childbed were driven¹, by the soldiery, naked into the streets; old men peaceably in their houses were shot dead; and such scenes exhibited as would disgrace the annals of the most uncivilized nations.

These, brethren, are marks of ministerial vengeance against this colony, for refusing, with her sister-colonies, a submission to slavery; but they have not yet detached us from our royal sovereign [King George III]. We profess to be his loyal and dutiful subjects, and so hardly dealt with as we have been, are ready, with our lives and fortunes, to defend his person, family, crown, and dignity. Nevertheless, to the persecution and tyranny of his cruel ministry we will not tamely submit: appealing to Heaven for the justice of our cause, we determine to die or be free....

We sincerely hope that the great Sovereign of the universe, who hath so often appeared for the English nation, will support you in every rational and manly exertion, with these colonies, for saving it from ruin; and that, in a consitutional connection with the mother-country, we shall soon be altogether a free and happy people.

"Per order:

"JOSEPH WARREN, *President, P. T.*"

¹ One woman, Hannah Adams, was forced from her bed and house with her 18-day-old baby
Discover Roxbury/Boston National Historical Park

NOW WHAT?

The Provincial Congress decided to restrict the Regulars to the peninsula of Boston. On April 23, 1775, they put into action plans they had made earlier for a provincial army. They recommended that 30,000 men from across New England be called to serve in this new army. They also named Artemas Ward as commander of all Massachusetts troops.

Activity 3: Positioning provincial troops

Have students look at the Big Map and consider the topography. Ask them, if they wanted to contain the Regulars in Boston, where would they position the provincial troops? Then show the unaltered DeCosta map of 1775 (PS 4). How does the placement of the provincial regiments compare to where students thought they should go? Add the troop placement to the Big Map. (If students are also working on their own 8 ½ x 11 size maps, they should draw in the positions of the troops there, too.)



Primary Source 4: “A plan of the town and harbour of Boston and the country adjacent with the road from Boston to Concord, shewing the place of the late engagement between the King’s troops & the provincials, together with the several encampments of both armies in & about Boston. By J. De Costa, created July 29, 1775, London.

Source: Library of Congress

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Are there differences between the present-day layout of the your town and the way it was in 1775? If yes, what are the differences?
- ❖ Who were the town representatives to the Provincial Congress?

PART 2: ROXBURY IN THE 1770S

ROXBURY'S EARLY HISTORY

What we now know as Roxbury was once the land of the Massachusett people; their sachem in the early 1600s was Chicatabut. A number of main Indian trails ran through Roxbury since it served as a link between inland and coastal areas. It is quite likely that the area had many seasonal settlements, but no sites have been found. They were probably destroyed by intense urban development.

In 1630 Roxbury was settled and incorporated as a town by English colonists (at the same time as towns such as Boston, Braintree, Salem, and Watertown). That makes it one of the oldest towns in Massachusetts and hence the United States. In the 1700s, it still included the neighborhoods of Mission Hill, West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain and was very large: eight miles by two miles, an area of 10,686 acres. The population of Roxbury in 1765 was 1,493, including 80 black people.

Roxbury was incorporated as a city in 1846 and in 1868 was annexed to Boston, ending its 238-year history as an independent town.

Activity 4: Discovering Roxbury in the early 1770s

Have students look at the statistics gathered on all the taxpayers in Roxbury (PS 5).

- What can students conclude about the town based on this information?
 - How did people make a living?
 - What did the town look like?
 - The largest number of cows anyone owned in town was twelve. But many families had one or two. What does that tell us about the purpose for which most families kept cows?
 - What does the production of more than a thousand barrels of cider tell us about Roxbury?

Primary Source 5: Totals from Roxbury's Tax Valuation List of 1771

In 1771, the town of Roxbury, which included what is now Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, and Mission Hill, included:

2,098 acres of pasture land
535 acres of tillage land
466 acres of saltmarsh
2 mills
90 tanneries, slaughterhouses, or shops—separate from their homes

The people kept:

289 horses
216 oxen
472 cattle
185 goats and sheep
152 pigs

Roxbury residents produced:

9,178 bushels of grain
1,215 barrels of cider

Next, distribute copies of Primary Source 6 (at end of lesson), which gives information about twelve taxpayers included in Roxbury's Tax Valuation List of 1771. Working in pairs or small groups, have students analyze the facts listed about one person (except for John Greateon and Peter, who can be combined).

- What did the individual's property look like?
- How does it appear that she or he made a living?
- What surprised you about the information on this person? What would you like to know more about?
- Report back to the class what you learned about the individual(s).

Activity 5: Creative Extension

Based on what they have learned from the tax records, ask students to create a visual representation of the person and his or her property. It can be a picture, collage, or poster. Display all the work to capture a sense of Roxbury in 1771.

Step Up: A fundamental contradiction lies at the heart of the American Revolution and the republic that was created after the war. Slavery was legal in every single one of the thirteen colonies. A number of men who fought for their own "liberty" were slave owners themselves. Dr. Joseph Warren owned a slave. General John Thomas owned a slave. General George Washington owned hundreds.

The total number of enslaved individuals listed on Roxbury's Tax Valuation List of 1771 is 22. This number includes "all Indian, Negro, or mulatto servants for life"—men and women—ages 14 to 45. The full number was definitely higher because older and younger individuals were not counted for tax purposes. Also, several families owned properties in Boston and Roxbury, and they and their slaves are listed in Boston's records. "Peter" is the only free black listed; he appears at the end. However, there were additional free black men and women living in Roxbury in the 1770s. For example, records show the marriages of four couples, but they would not have been listed in the Tax Valuation list if they didn't own property and didn't have to pay taxes.

The total number of enslaved individuals listed in Boston (in 1771) was 325; it was the largest slave-owning town in Massachusetts. The number of free black taxpayers in Boston was 4. The 1776 census showed 5,249 enslaved individuals in Massachusetts.

However, there were men and women, black and white, who spoke out against slavery. Among them was the Reverend Amos Adams of the First Parish in Roxbury. Read his essay and discuss the reasons he gives for ending slavery.

Primary Source 7: Excerpts from "The Slave Trade is a spectacle that shocks Humanity" printed in the *Boston Evening Post*, May 2, 1768.

The business of *making and keeping Slaves*... *for a long season among us, as a harmless and innocent practice*, will, notwithstanding, upon a strict and honest inquiry, be found, if I am not mistaken, directly contrary to *sacred scripture* and *solid reason*. It is certain, it must forever stand condemned, by that *eternal rule of righteousness* laid down...[that] *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* i.e, whatever is fit, and just and reasonable, for us to desire and expect from other men, it is unquestionably our duty to act and behave in like manner with respect to them.... And here I would ask the question, is it fit, just, or reasonable, that we, together with our wives and children, should be forcibly carried out of our land and *sold for slaves among the Negroes?* —if not—then neither is it fit, just, or

reasonable that they should be treated in like manner by us. For it is a *certain everlasting truth*, that we have no more right to make slaves of any nation on the face of the earth, than another nation has to make slaves of us.

Every man that is born into the world, is *born free*, and cannot justly be made a slave, unless by *some act of his own*, he forfeits his liberty into the hands of public justice; I say *public justice*, because it is an affair of too great importance for persons in a *private capacity* to determine.... We have been loudly complaining [to the British Parliament] of the *heavy burdens* cast upon us, and, that by the infringement of *our natural rights*, we are like to be reduced to a state of *slavery*. But with what face can we look up and plead for *these*, while we suffer so many of our *fellow creatures* to remain in the most abject slavery?

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

- ❖ What is known about how Native Americans lived and worked in your town in the 17th century? Did they cultivate crops? Was there a village? Did they fish in a large river nearby? Did they live in the area seasonally? When?
- ❖ When was your town settled by English colonists? When was it incorporated as a town?
- ❖ Does your town have the same name now as it did in 1770s? Did it once include what are now separate towns? Or was it once a part of another large town?
- ❖ What did the town look like in the 1770s? Do any buildings or properties from that time still exist? Are there historic markers to show where they stood if they are gone?
- ❖ How did people make a living in your town just before the Revolution?
- ❖ Were there free black people living in your town in the 1770s? Were there any enslaved people in your town at that time?

PART 3: THE SIEGE

ROXBURY DURING THE SIEGE

General John Thomas was in command of the men in Roxbury. He used the parsonage—what is now known as the Dillaway Thomas House—as his headquarters. More than half of the Massachusetts men serving had participated in the events of April 19. The rest were new recruits. The Rhode Island Assembly voted to send 1,500 men under General Nathanael Greene. New Hampshire voted to send 2,000, and from Connecticut 6,000 men marched to join the siege. We know that black men and Native Americans were among the soldiers in the army; research is ongoing so we can learn how many served in the siege and who they were. By early June 1775, 16,000 enlisted provincials encircled Boston and General Howe's 6,500 Regulars.

A number of individuals loyal to Great Britain's king and parliament lived in Roxbury, as they did in every town in Massachusetts. They were known as Loyalists or Tories. Many left their homes and fled to Boston after April 19. During the siege, some of their homes were used by the Continental Army. For example, General Greene of RI used Joshua Loring's property as his headquarters; later the house became an army hospital. Colonel Learned's regiment stayed in Judge Robert Auchmuty's home. He, too was a Loyalist. These properties were among the ones permanently confiscated in 1779.

On June 14, 1775, the Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, chose General George Washington as commander in chief of the Continental Army. He arrived in Cambridge July 2 and first visited the Roxbury camp on July 13. General Washington was taking command of men with little training and knowledge of military life and few supplies. Another huge challenge that he faced was that the men had enlisted to serve only until the end of 1775. At the end of November, the general wrote to his friend, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Reed: "Could I foreseen what I have, and am likely to experience, no consideration upon Earth should have induced me to accept this Command." Despite all the difficulties, the Continentals managed to pull it off. Some soldiers stayed on and new recruits came in January and February so that by March, the army again had about 16,000 men. (visit www.nps.gov/long for Washington's headquarters in Cambridge.)

Activity 6: The Eleven-month-long Siege

Have a map of Boston in 1775 visible (Primary Source 4) Discuss as a class:

- What is a siege?
- Why did the Provincial Congress decide to keep the Regulars in Boston under siege?
- What challenges might the provincial troops have faced? What might they have been afraid of?
- What challenges might the Regulars have faced? For example, how were they to get food for their army?
- Why was Roxbury so important in the siege?

Activity 7: Learning from soldiers' diaries

Among the approximately 5,000 soldiers stationed in Roxbury, at least two kept journals. Have half the students read the excerpts from Samuel Bixby's journal (Primary Source 8) and the other half read excerpts from Samuel Hawes' journal (Primary Source 9).

Note: Copies of Primary Source 8 and 9 on the CD-ROM include footnotes, which define terms and give additional explanations. The spelling is exactly as it was in the original journal. If students get stuck, suggest they simply sound out the word.

Primary Source 8: Excerpts from the diary of Samuel Bixby, May 4, 1775–January 3, 1776

Samuel Bixby enlisted in Isaac Bolster's company in Sutton, Massachusetts on May 1st, 1775. He served for eight months.

May 4th Took our journey, and encamped this night at Sudbury.

May 5th Took our journey, & pitched our tents in Roxbury.

May 6th It is said the Regulars were about to make an attack somewhere; and about 6 o'clock P.M. the Army was on the Grand parade. The Col[onel] ordered us to lie by our arms & ammunition all night. But there was no disturbance.

May 14th Last Sunday the Meeting House was full of soldiers, and news came that the Regulars were landing on Dorchester Point. The General ordered the drums beat to arms, and as soon as the drums sounded, the soldiers were out of the Meeting House in the twinkling of an eye. We paraded, and marched to Dorchester Neck, as it was said the enemy was landing from the Castle. It proved to be a false alarm, and we returned to our quarters. We were ordered to lie by our arms through the night.

May 27th Saturday. About 200 men were detached to go to the Point to guard it. About 9 or 10 o'clock in the evening we heard the cannon roar, and the small arms crack for about an hour, in the direction of Marblehead or Medford, as we thought. We have since learnt that it was Col. Putman, & his men on Noddle's Island, where he engaged the Regulars, and took 300 sheep, and 200 lambs. One ship run aground, & they burnt it. He also took some cattle....

June 3rd Saturday. Drawed provisions for Sunday; namely, Bread, Dry-fish, Potatoes, Butter, Rice, &c

June 4th Sunday. Nothing remarkable.

June 5th Monday. This day is "Artillery Election;" but it was not much thought of by the soldiers. About 12 o'clock the Regulars fired from the Fortification; and they fired from the Castle at a party of our men on shore digging clams, but did no damage. Our men picked up one of the balls, a 24 pounder, and carried it to the General, who gave them two gallons of rum. A party of our men out toward Noddle's Island captured a barge and four men belonging to a man of war, and carried it ashore at Cambridge, and this day brought the barge to Roxbury in a cart, with the sails up and three men in it. It was marched round the Meeting House, while the Engineer fired the Cannon for joy.

June 6th Tuesday. Orders to wash the floor of the Barracks, and clean out every hold and corner, and to sweep the yards. General Thomas and Heath went to Dorchester Point to view & lay out a place where to entrench, in order to storm the Castle. The Regulars fired three times at them with their Cannon, but did no harm. Our sentries stopped a team going into Boston with a load of hay. They threw the hay off, & found 2 calves, 32 watches, a great number of letters, some veal, several boxes butter, 2 bushels green peas, and some mutton....

continued

June 8th Thursday. A man to be whipped 20 lashes for stealing.

June 9th Friday. The man who was going into Boston with the hay &c. was tried by a Court Martial, and acquitted, as he proved not be a Tory.—...

June 13th General Court Martial. A man sentenced to 20 lashes and drummed out of camp for striking without cause, a soldier.—Eight ships sailed into Boston harbor today....

June 16th Friday. Firing by the Regulars in Boston. Went on the Grand parade, where about 300 men were drawn for the Point Piquet, and about 600 to entrench the piquet.

About 9 o.c. P.M. the Regulars in Boston fired an alarm, and rung the bells. We heard them drawing the carriages to the neck, & the riding of horses with great speed up to their guard and back into Boston, and there was great commotion there. It was supposed they were preparing to attack us in the morning, but no special orders were issued. The town seemed to be alive with men marching in all directions....

June 17th *Bixby first describes the Battle of Bunker Hill then continues:*

About noon we fired an alarm, & rung the bells in Roxbury; and every man was ordered to arms, as an attack was expected.

Col. Larned marched his regiment up to the Meeting House, & then to the burying yard, which was the alarm post, where we laid in ambush with two field pieces placed to give it to them unawares, should the Regulars come.

About 6 o.c. the enemy drew in their sentries, & immediately a heavy fire was opened from the Fortification. The balls whistled over our heads, & through the houses, making the clapboards and shingles fly in all directions.

Before the firing had begun, the General ordered some men down the street to fall some apple trees across the street, to hinder the approach of their Artillery.

Lieut[enant] Hazeltine packed up a 12 lbs ball—we were anwious to get their balls as though they were gold balls. The firing is still kept up at Charlestown & Cambridge. The enemy threw bomb-shells hourly into Roxbury during the night. Col. Larned ordered his Regiment to encamp in the safest place. Our company took cover behind a hill....

June 22nd Thursday. We are still entrenching here & in Cambridge, & making our position as strong and secure as we can. We have thrown up a strong work across the street, and also one across the road to Dorchester. The enemy has withdrawn the sentires to the Fortification.

Within three weeks 14 Ships have arrived in Boston harbor.

June 23rd Friday. Nothing new this day, unless it is new to dig graves. We see the Regulars, with the spy glass digging graves in Boston.—We are still building the Fort....

June 24th, 1775 Saturday *After describing several skirmishes and noting that two of their men were killed, Bixby writes* Two houses in Roxbury were set on fire.

June 25th Sunday. ...They lost several men....

Primary Source 9: Excerpts from the Diary of Samuel Haws, April 19, 1775–February 10, 1776

Samuel Haws of Wrentham was a Minuteman. He begins his journal on April 19, 1775, writing,

About one a clock the minute men were alarmed and met at Landlord Moons. We marched from there the sun about half an our high towards Roxbury.

He describes their long march with several stops and continues:

Then we marched to Jamicai plain their we heard that the regulars Were a coming over the neck then we striped of our coats and marched on with good courage to Colonel Williams and their we heard to the contrary. We staid their some time and refreshed our Selves and then marched to Roxbury parade and their we had as much Liquor as we wanted and every man drawd three Biscuit which were taken from the regulars the day before....

continued

[April] 27. The inlistment came out to inlist men for the masechusetts Service. Some of our minute men enlisted the Same day [*but others returned home.*] on the same day their war [*were*] four tories caried throug roxbury to cambrigg from marshfield and their was a great Shouting when they came through the camp.

[April] 28. This day our regement paraded and went through the manuel exesise then we grounded our firelocks and every man set down by their arms and one abial Petty axedentely discharged his peace [*musket*] and shot two Balls through the Body of one asa cheany through his Left side and rite rist [*wrist*]

[April] 29 About nine o clock said cheney died....

[April] 30 Being the Lord's day we went to meeting and heard Mr. Adams and he preached a very Sutable Sermon for the ocation.

[May] 1. Nothing very remarkable this day.

[May] 2-11 Nothing of consequence happened.

[May] 12-14 No great for news.

[May] 15, 16 No news worth mentioning.

[May] 30 Captain Ponds company moved to comodore Lorings house....

[June] 9. We passed muster Before colonel Robinson and received one months pay.

[June] 10 Their was a man Whiped for Stealing.

[June]11 Their was a soldier died at the hospittle which was the first that had died of Sickness since we incampt...

[July 10] [At] night [it] being clear [our men] set out for Long Island [in whale boats] and arived there in a Short time and then they Plundered the island and took from thence 19 head of horned cattle and a number of Sheep and three Swine also eighteen priseners and amongst them were three women.

[July] 12 [Soldiers went] to Long island to burn the Buildings their when they were attacked by the Kings troops and had a smart engagement but we Lost one man...

[July] 25 Our Regiment with four more were under arms and marched towards cambridge to meet general Ward....

[July] 31 This day major tupper and his men returned to Roxbury with between thirty and forty prisoners some regulars and some torys and some mariens [*marines*] and had something of a battle and we lost one man and another wounded and our men Burnt the Light house and took some plunder[.] thar was an alarm [.] the firing began first at the floating Battery and then at the Brest Work [*breastwork*] and then the troops marched out and set the george tavern on fire[.] our men took one prisoner and the same night one of the enemy deserted and came to our centrys at Dorchester point and brought away with him too [2] guns and too cartridg Boxes and 60 rounds of cartridgs all in good order and their was several more deserted to cambridg the same night....

[August] 11 Their was three men whipt for deserting they were whipt ten stripes apiece they belonged to the conecticut forces....

[August] 15 Two Oclock this Afternoon when the Lobsters fired on our guards which was returned by our Roxbury fort[.] the firing was continued for some time but how much to their Damag we don't know[.] one of our men was slitley wounded[.] their fireing was from a floating Batery and it is thought would have killed one or too men if they had not have Lain down[.] for the Ball passed within about 4 foot of our Barack[.] the night passed without any alarm....

After the students have read the journal entries once, have them work in pairs or small groups to reread the excerpts and to answer the questions (A worksheet with the questions is also on the CD-ROM).

1. How far did the soldier have to march from home to Roxbury? Did the men reach Roxbury in one day? If not, how long did it take?
2. What do you learn about the day-to-day life of a soldier camped in Roxbury during the siege?
3. What do you learn about the relationship between the Regulars in Boston and the Continental Army stationed around Boston?
4. Why did men go out to the Boston islands to get animals?
5. (Bixby, June 6) Why was the hay wagon stopped from going into Boston? What happened to the man trying to take the wagon into Boston?
6. On a number of days, the soldiers write that nothing happened. How do you think they spent their time? Why might it be a problem if many days in a row nothing happened?
7. What did the Continental Army do to protect itself from the Regulars?
8. What were some of the offenses soldiers committed and how were they punished?
9. What kind of damage was done to Roxbury properties? Who caused the damage?
10. What surprises you about the journal entries? What would you like to know more about and how can you find answers to your questions?

Activity 8: Map work

Using symbols, add information from the journals to the class Big Map. If students have their own copies of Boston in 1775, have them add information to those.

Activity 9: What was the effect of the siege on Roxbury?

Ask students how they think the town of Roxbury (with a pre-siege population of probably about 1,600) would have been affected by 1) the presence of 5,000 soldiers and 2) what they have just read about the hostilities between Regulars and the Continental Army soldiers. Then read aloud Dr. Belknap's description of the town in October 1775 (Primary Source 10). As a class, list on the board all the details that this gives us about Roxbury during the siege.

Primary Source 10: A description of Roxbury in October 1775

On October 20, 1775, Dr. Belknap visited the lines at Roxbury and wrote:

Nothing strikes me with more horror than the present condition of Roxbury: that once busy, crowded street is now occupied by a picket guard. The houses are deserted, the windows taken out, and many shot-holes visible; some have been burnt, and others pulled down, to make room for the fortifications. A wall of earth is carried across the street to William's old house, where there is a formidable fort mounted with cannon. The lower line is just below where the George Tavern stood; a row of trees, root and branch, lies across the road there, and the breastworks extends to Lamb's Dam, which makes a part thereof. I went round the whole and was so near the enemy as to see them (though it was foggy and rainy) relieve their sentries, which they do every hour.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Did anyone from the students' town participate in the siege of Boston? Was anyone stationed in Roxbury? (Town histories, historical societies, or local archives often have this information.)
- ❖ How was the students' town affected by events between April 19, 1775 and March 17, 1776?

THE SIEGE ENDS

In the middle of February 1776, with the Back Bay area of Boston frozen, General Washington wanted to attack the Regulars to drive them out of Boston. His generals, however, opposed the plan and suggested something else. They wanted to take advantage of the cannon that Henry Knox and his men had just dragged to Cambridge all the way from Fort Ticonderoga (see the related Mass Moment in Further Resources below).

Activity 10: Secret fortification at Dorchester Point

Read the order from General Ward to General Thomas, who was stationed in Roxbury, and identify Dorchester Point on the 1775 map. What are General Thomas's instructions?

Primary Source 11: Order from Major General Ward to Brigadier General Thomas

Camp @ Roxbury 4 March, 1776

Brigadier general Thomas is to take command of 2100 men which are to be paraded @ Dorchester @ six o'clock this evening, with which he is to proceed to Dorchester Point and there throw up such works on the two commanding eminences, as with the advice of the engineer shall think most proper for the defense of the ground and annoyance of the enemy and defend the same.

By order of Major General Ward

Joseph Ward
Aide de camp

Read General Thomas's letter to his wife (Primary Source 12) and discuss:

- What happened the night of March 5–6, 1776.
- How were General Thomas's troops able to do what they did without the Regulars noticing?
- What advantage did the Continental Army gain by placing cannon at Dorchester Heights?
- What do we learn from the note at the end of the letter?

Primary Source 12: Letter from General John Thomas to his wife, March 9, 1776

Dear Mrs. Thomas

We have for some time been preparing to take possession of Dorchester Point, and last Monday night about 7 o'clock, I marched with about 3,000 picked men, beside 360 ox teams and some pieces of artillery. Two companies of the train of teams were laden with materials for our works. About 8 o'clock we ascended the high hills and by daylight got two hills defensible.

About sunrise the enemy and others in Boston appeared numerous on the tops of houses and on the wharfs viewing us with astonishment, for our appearance was unexpected to them. The cannonading which kept up all night from our lines at Lamb's Dam and from the enemy's lines, likewise at Lechmere Point, now ceased from those quarters, and the enemy turned their fire toward us on the hills, but they soon found it was to little effect.

About 10 o'clock we discovered large bodies of troops embarking in boats with their artillery, which made a formidable appearance. After some time they were put on board transports and several of the ships came down near the castle, as we supposed with a design to land on our shore.

Our people appeared in good spirits to receive them. We were now in a good position of defense, and had 2,000 men added to our number. The enemy viewed us critically, and we remained in that situation that night. The next day they came to sail, and returned to town and landed these troops. On Friday, about 2 o'clock pm, they sent a flag of truce with a paper, a copy of which I have enclosed.

I have had very little sleep or rest this week, being closely employed day and night. But now I think we are well secured. I write in haste, thinking you may be anxious to hear, as there is much firing this way. We lost but two men killed in all this affair. How things are in Boston or what loss they have sustained from our shots and shells, at present we are not informed, but I am sensible we distressed them much, from appearances. I have wrote you enclosed by the same hand and in haste.

John Thomas

Dorchester Hills, in a small hut, March 9, 1776

Your son John is well and in high spirits. He ran away from Oakley² privately, on Tuesday morning and got by the sentries and came to me on Dorchester Hills, where he has been most of the time.

² Oakley was probably General Thomas's slave.

PART 4: THE REGULARS LEAVE

THE EVACUATION

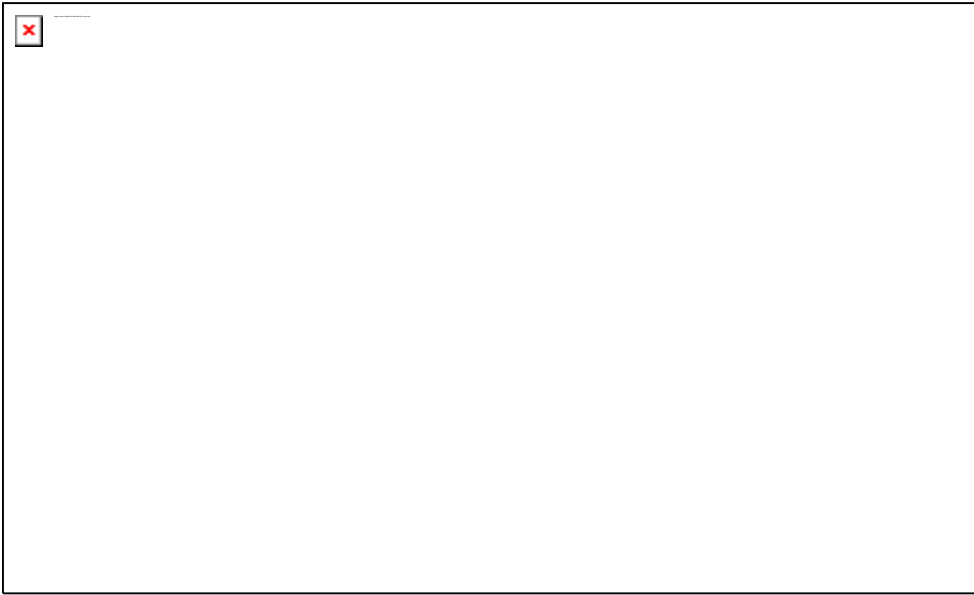
The Regulars under command of General Howe considered attacking Dorchester Heights to dislodge the Continental troops. Bad weather prevented this. By the middle of March, they concluded that they had no choice but to leave. The artillery on Dorchester Heights threatened the British navy vessels in Boston Harbor. The Regulars began to load the ships preparing to leave. On March 17, 1776, about 11,000 British army and navy personnel and almost 1,000 Loyalists sailed out of Boston Harbor.

THE SIEGE REMEMBERED

To celebrate their remarkable victory, Americans immediately printed and distributed broadsides. In time they wrote songs, created commemorative medals, put on plays, and held ceremonies. Every year, Suffolk County, which includes Boston, celebrates March 17 as Evacuation Day.

Activity 11: Examining an image

Show the woodcut print image of the Evacuation of Boston (Primary Source 13) on a screen or distribute copies to the students. Discuss as a class the details of the woodcut. Bonus question: The woodcut was created by a German. Why would a German have been among those evacuating Boston in March 1776?



Primary Source 13

<http://memory.loc.gov/master/pnp/cph/3a40000/3a45000/3a45700/3a45743u.tif>

Activity 12: Culminating activity—a reunion

Using information from the brief biographies at the end of the lesson, the 1771 tax valuation lists, online resources, and books, have students adopt the persona of one of the individuals who was alive in the Boston area in 1775. (For a partial list, see supplementary materials.) The characters will gather for an imagined “reunion” in 1785. Brainstorm ahead of the event for topics that the group will discuss. On the day the reunion is held, each individual must stay in character as s/he talks about the events of April 1775 through March 1776. (Girls may need to take on male roles since we, sadly, have little information about women in this time period.)

FURTHER RESOURCES

<http://www.nps.gov/mima/> Minute Man National Historic Park

<http://www.nps.gov/long> Longfellow National Historic Site; the Longfellow House served as General George Washington’s headquarters during the Siege of Boston.

<http://www.massmoments.org/moment.cfm?mid=29> this Mass Moment tells the story of how Henry Knox brought the cannon to Massachusetts

<http://www.massmoments.org/moment.cfm?mid=270> Mass Moments, the online almanac of Massachusetts history, includes a “moment” about the growth of Boston

Battle of Bunker Hill:

<http://www.masshist.org/bh/> “The Decisive Day is Come” Massachusetts Historical Society site on the battle, includes a timeline, biographies, and primary sources

<http://www.nps.gov/bost/historyculture/bhm.htm> Bunker Hill Monument

Slavery and free people of color:

<http://www.masshist.org/endofslavery/> Massachusetts Historical Society site with text and excellent primary sources related to slavery, the end of it, and lives of free people of color in Massachusetts

<http://www.massmoments.org/index.cfm?mid=244> this Mass Moment tells the story of the court cases brought by enslaved individuals, which ended slavery in Massachusetts

Additional maps:

www.military.com/Resources/ResourceFileView/americanrevolution_maps_map01 West Point Atlas has a simple clear map showing fortifications for both sides

www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/print/exhibits/cities/captions/image24.html the New York Public Library has Henry Pelham's 1777 etching and aquatint of "Boston in New England with Its Environs"

Curriculum resources:

A Song Full of Hope, 1770–1830. Book 2 in a 5-book curriculum resource series, *Making Freedom: African Americans in U. S. History*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004. Includes text and lesson plans based on primary sources written by teachers for teachers.

"Honored Places: The National Park Service Teachers' Guide to the American Revolution," available from www.nps.gov/revwar

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/NR/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/42bunker/42bunker.htm> a "Teaching With Historic Places" lesson plan for the Battle of Bunker Hill

WRITTEN FOR HISTORIC ROXBURY
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Instructions for Making Big Maps

The technique described here empowers students to seek out and demonstrate geographic knowledge on a large outline map traced onto paper or a foam-core board using a transparency on an overhead projector. This method motivates students to learn and then remember geographic information because they find it and use it.

Use an outline map of the greater Boston area as it appeared in the 18th century, including major rivers but leaving out all names of places. Students will use information from the DeCosta map of 1775 and will transfer this onto both their own maps and the enlarged class Big Map.

Developing the map as the lesson progresses:

Students can add to a base map throughout the unit with new information from their discussions and readings. They may want to print images from websites and attach them to appropriate places on the map. Color-coded keys can be simple or complex, depending on the age of the students.

Students develop a strong sense of ownership in their creations that, once completed, make an impressive statement in school corridors, libraries, entryways or cafeterias. Big Maps also provide an impressive tool for authentic assessment especially when students ‘tell the stories of what they have learned’ to peers or adults.

Materials required:

- Overhead projector(s)
- Transparency acetate, 8 1/2” x 11”, which can be fed through a copy machine (available at office supply stores)
- A simple outline map of the area under study with rivers and major roads but no writing on it
- Thick permanent markers
- A large (minimum 3’ x 4’) piece of butcher paper (or four pieces of chart paper taped together on the back) taped to a smooth wall. The larger the map, the more engaging it is for students. Foam-core board or cardboard are good for making relief maps which must be laid flat after the outline has been traced.

A. Prepare a transparency for the overhead projector:

Use the outline map of greater Boston in 1775 with no writing on the map. Place the outline map on a copy machine and run a sheet of transparency acetate through the machine as if it was ordinary paper. The traced image will appear on the acetate exactly like a xerox copy.

B. Before students arrive in class:

Tape a large (minimum 3' x 4') piece of butcher paper onto a smooth wall. (Wrinkles result in inaccuracies right from the beginning.) Alternatively, use a flat piece of cardboard or foam-core board suspended vertically against a hard surface.

Using the overhead projector, focus the transparency on the paper. Adjust the projector until the map fills the entire space. Tape the transparency to the surface of the projector and place the projector on a chair. It is essential that this arrangement not be inadvertently moved once the students begin to trace the image onto the butcher paper because it is very hard to reposition the image once it has been disturbed. Tracing the corners of the transparency onto the butcher paper can help to realign the image if it gets knocked out of place.

C. Students trace the big map onto paper or board with permanent markers:

While the class completes an assignment using 8 1/2"x11" copies of the map, allow two or three students at a time to begin tracing the outline map with the permanent marker. Tracing the whole outline should take no more than 20-30 minutes. All students should have at least one minute of tracing time. The result is a template onto which students can add features (names of places, action of April 19, 1775, later the position of provincial troops and events throughout the siege). As they learn about them, so that the Big Map grows richer and more complete as the unit progresses.